

ALTERNITY

ACTION CHECK

ONLINE + MAGAZINE

DARK • MATTER

Of Ghosts & Goblins



A Dark*Matter Adventure by Neil Spicer

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Table of Contents

Cover Art: "Ghosts and Goblins" by Dragan Ciric
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Page 3 Of Ghosts and Goblins [Neil Spicer]
An Alternity Dark*Matter adventure

GUIDE TO SIDEBARS

Scaling the Adventure	3
Rachel Prewitt	8
Security Break-In Results Ladder	12
Goblin Technology	14
Wray Security Guard	14
Goblin Technician	16
Colombian Mercenary	18
Orrin Wray	19
Goblins	21

GUIDE TO MAPS

Armadillo Dump	9
Wray Basement	13
Goblin Cave and Starship	17



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OF GHOSTS AND GOBLINS

By Neil Spicer

“Of Ghosts and Goblins” is a beginning ALTER-NITY Dark*Matter adventure for 3-5 heroes of 1st level. A good mix of professions is important since the heroes will require a variety of skills to complete their mission. Combat Specs, Free Agents, and at least one Tech-Op skilled in *Security-security devices*, Technical Science-*xenoengineering*, and Computer Science-*hacking* should be given heavy consideration. A Diplomat with *Culture-first contact*, could also prove useful. This adventure draws upon information contained within the *Alternity Gamemaster's Guide*, *Dark*Matter Campaign Setting*, *Dark*Matter Arms & Equipment Guide*, and the *Xenofoms* supplement. Heroes that survive this adventure should amass enough achievement points to advance at least halfway to 2nd level. In addition, the adventure can also accommodate more experienced heroes of higher level. See the sidebar “Scaling the Adventure” for more details.

Adventure Background

This adventure revolves around one man's financial difficulties, his fascination with alien technology, and the strange otherworldly visitors from whom he receives his latest breakthroughs. Orrin Wray made a living traveling abroad as a mercenary-for-hire after leaving the United States Army, becoming involved in a number of paranormal and extraterrestrial encounters. He only returned to the States eight years ago when his father passed away so he could reclaim the family corporation, Wray Information Systems. He had to dig deep into his personal funds and make a series of hasty loans to barely pull the company out of bankruptcy. His little known secret is that he's still teetering on the edge of financial ruin and searching for a way to make money fast.

In 1998, Orrin made contact with a group of Goblins on an Internet “fringe” newsgroup called alt.alien.visitors. Initially skeptical, he accepted their invitation to visit an auction website event to bid on some computer accessories the Goblins brought with them from another star system. Considered low-tech pieces at best on the world where the Goblins acquired them, Orrin discovered the hardware to be light-years ahead of his competition. Seizing the opportunity, he reached

out to his previous contacts for potential investors so he could acquire the off-world goods. This landed him in an illegal business arrangement with Colombian drug runners in South America. In exchange for laundering their drug money and assistance in the smuggling operation, they offered him a cut of the cocaine that he could then trade for Goblin wares. Viewing cocaine as a novelty consumer product, the Goblins were more than happy to do business with Orrin, planning to carry the drug out of the star system for resale to other buyers.

Everything went well for a year or two, and Orrin believed he might finally free himself and his company from financial debt. That was, until four months ago. A young reporter by the name of

Scaling the Adventure

This adventure is intended for 1st level heroes, however it may also accommodate heroes of 2nd thru 5th level with some minor adjustments. Remember that altering the number of adversaries and challenges opposing the heroes should also result in a modification to the total number of achievement points awarded at the end of the adventure. It is recommended that heroes of 1st thru 3rd level be awarded enough achievement points to advance another level, or at least halfway to a new level. Heroes of 4th or 5th level should expect a smaller amount of achievement points, just barely enough to put them halfway to another level. The following adjustments are recommended:

2nd level: Simply increase the number of Colombian mercenaries in Scenes Two and Five and prolong Rachel's chaotic outburst when the heroes first encounter her in the Trigger Scene.

3rd level: Apply the options listed above, and also increase the number of Goblins operating in the lower tunnels and passages by two in Scenes Four and Five.

4th thru 5th level: Apply all options listed above and include a powerful guardian aboard the Goblin ship in Scene Five. The creature could be another extraterrestrial brought with the Goblins from a distant world, a prisoner unleashed from a strange alien artifact, or a servitor race much like the Sasquatch are to the Greys.

Rachel Prewitt joined his company around that time, going undercover as an assembly-line worker. She intended to uncover the truth behind the rise of Wray Information Systems when so many other technology companies were in decline. She believed they must be engaging in underhanded activities and resolved to prove it. Unfortunately for her, she managed to stumble upon the truth. Not only did she learn about Orrin's involvement with Colombian drug-runners, but also the source of his cutting-edge technology: the Goblins. Initially, Rachel contacted the Drug Enforcement Agency with an anonymous tip, but she knew her biggest success would be measured by acquiring pictures of the strange alien visitors. She stole a security passkey so she could eavesdrop on one of Orrin's high-level meetings. Before she could escape with the images she captured on her digital camera, Orrin's men captured her.

Afraid that Rachel's nosiness would ruin everything, Orrin had his Colombian friends arrange for her "disappearance." The violent nature of her death transformed her into a ghost that now yearns for revenge. Unknown to Orrin or his mercenaries, Rachel managed to hide the memory disk from her camera before they killed her. At the very least, she wants to use those images to expose Orrin Wray and ruin him. If given the opportunity, however, she would like nothing more than to see him and his Colombian friends join her in the afterlife.

Adventure Summary

In the beginning, the heroes are literally pulled into the adventure by the ghost of Rachel Prewitt. Late one night, while visiting friends at a Fort Worth news publication, they observe a manifestation of her otherworldly spirit. The results of her fledgling psychokinetic powers cause chaos and panic. Rachel attempts to communicate with a former co-worker, but he is too frightened to respond and becomes injured during the episode. Only the heroes manage to understand her and she turns to them for help.

In Scene Two, Rachel guides the heroes to the actual site of her death, a junkyard somewhere on the outskirts of the city. She encourages them to retrieve the disk from her digital camera, which she managed to hide prior to her death. It contains proof of Orrin's shady dealings. A number

of Orrin's Colombian friends are also discovered at the site. The Colombians are in the process of conducting another execution involving the Drug Enforcement Agent that came to investigate Rachel's anonymous tip. The mercenaries assume the heroes are with the authorities and have come to rescue the man. They immediately try to eliminate the threat posed by the PCs' presence, opening fire in a mad scramble to escape. This forces the heroes into combat, both to save the DEA agent and to locate the disk from Rachel's camera. Rachel's ghost once again manifests in small ways to aid them.

Scene Three opens with the challenge of questioning the DEA agent, assuming the heroes actually managed to save him. A search of the shacks occupied by the mercenaries and the surrounding junkyard finally reveals Rachel's body, the camera and its memory disk, and evidence of the Colombian drug operation. Examining the images from Rachel's camera, it becomes apparent that an extraterrestrial race is operating somewhere in the Texas area and has somehow become involved in the drug trade. Clues among the photographs and the DEA agent's testimony point to Wray Information Systems.

Scene Four involves a clandestine raid on Orrin's corporate compound to uncover the truth. The buildings are strangely quiet but security is strongly centered on two elevators leading to the lower levels. Battling deep underground, they finally arrive at a massive tunnel complex cut into the bedrock by alien fusion torches. A Goblin technician is surprised by their arrival and attempts to escape and warn the others.

Scene Five brings the heroes face-to-face with Orrin aboard the Goblin ship, currently berthed in a massive underground cavern. A battle quickly ensues against more of his Colombian mercenaries. Rachel attempts to manifest and assist the heroes, but the Goblins imprison her in an alien artifact. It's up to the heroes to rescue her and stop Orrin and his men.

Scene Six wraps up the adventure by giving the heroes an opportunity to interact with the alien artifact and free Rachel. She thanks them for bringing her murderers to justice and fades away. The heroes are then left with cleaning up the mess left behind.

Getting the Heroes Involved

The adventure assumes that the heroes are working for the Hoffmann Institute, and therefore have a good reason for following up on the case. However, many alternate methods exist for getting them involved. The following are merely suggestions:

One of the heroes could be a good friend of Rachel Prewitt, bringing the others together to assist in a personal investigation of her disappearance.

Heroes with government connections (DEA, FBI, etc.) could have been sent to Texas to investigate illegal drug trafficking coming across the Mexican border and originating in South America.

A hero with contacts among the Grey Ahotti faction could have received a hint regarding the strange occurrences in Dallas, purposefully leading him or her to investigate the matter. The Greys have reason to believe that Goblins are interfering with their own plans for humanity and want the heroes to take steps to counter them. However, they don't tell them that, of course.

Heroes with professions and/or interests in Texas could easily find their way to Dallas, either as a homecoming or possibly as a prelude to another investigation into Sandman activities in nearby Houston.

Trigger Scene: Spiritual Guidance

When you're ready to begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following text to your players. Special care should be taken to keep the scene as dark and suspenseful as possible.

Your flight into Dallas-Fort Worth left you shaken and more than a bit nauseous thanks to all the upper air turbulence. Powerful weather patterns had stirred up a number of Texas twisters and though none of them threatened your immediate survival, they were sure to keep you from catching the next plane out. Just as you suspected, the airport canceled your connecting flight as soon as you collected your bags. The Hoffmann Institute would just have to wait awhile longer for your next debriefing.

Luckily you already knew a friend in town that could fix you up with a place to stay. His name was Hal Robinson and he worked for the news media. You knew him back when he used to be

a TV personality, but nowadays Hal's work only appeared in printed publications, usually an editorial piece in the financial section of the local newspaper. He was more than happy to renew old friendships and invited you to meet him at his office when you called.

The heroes should have an opportunity to clear security at the airport and hail a taxi. If any of the players' heroes don't know each other yet, the Gamemaster should devise a reason for bringing them together. Perhaps they split the fare for a ride into town, banding together to ride out the storm before they catch their next flight. At least one of the heroes should be an acquaintance of Hal (use the template for an Ordinary Reporter in Chapter 6 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). Regardless, the ride to his office only takes twenty minutes. He greets everyone with typical southern hospitality, offering them coffee or hot chocolate to warm up. After a few minutes, continue the scene by reading the following:

You're relaxing in the large office pool of Hal's news agency, spread out among several desks and cubicles. Most of the staff has already left, and Hal tells you he's supposed to lock up on his way out. He takes a sip from his cup of coffee and asks for another story of your most recent adventures. Though he's unaware that you work for the Hoffmann Institute, he's always known that you perform investigations for an important government agency. As a true friend, he has never published anything you've told him off the record, but still, none of you have ever given him the full story about the things you do as Hoffmann agents.

You're just starting to explain your last adventure to him, properly edited of course, when the computer monitor on his desk interrupts you. At first, the device merely flickers off and then back on again. Hal frowns and stares at it for a moment. "That's weird..." he starts to mutter, and then the desk itself begins to tremble. Next to you, a wastebasket tumbles over, spilling its trash across the floor. "What is it?" Hal asks, clearly alarmed now, "An earthquake?"

But there are no tremors to support that theory. Instead, the desk suddenly heaves away from Hal, sliding across the newsroom floor and smashing into a coat rack and several chairs. A

startling coldness seeps into the air, raising goosebumps on your arms. The trash on the floor starts to move as well, swirling around until it forms a miniature tornado reaching all the way up to the ceiling. Finally, a distant voice emanates from inside the vortex. "Haaaaaaaal..." it calls, "Heeeelp meeee..." What do you do?

At this point, the heroes should begin to surmise that a ghost has come to speak with Hal. The apparition belongs to Rachel Prewitt, a former friend of Hal's inside the news business. She used to help him with investigative reports into financial markets and corporate holdings. Now that she's a ghost, she has come to ask his help in seeking revenge upon her murderers instead. Unfortunately, her manifestation is a shock for her as well as everyone else. New to the ways of the spirit world, she hasn't quite mastered her newfound psychokinetic abilities yet and doesn't quite know how to go about contacting the real world.

Make the manifestation scene as chaotic and frightening as possible:

Round One: On the Good phase, the vortex loses cohesion and swirling trash is thrown outward in a blinding storm, reducing visibility and imposing a +1 step penalty on all actions. A successful Awareness-*perception* skill check can be used as an action to peer through the debris, thereby negating the penalty for any follow-up actions in the same round. On the Marginal phase, three computers are drawn into the air and tossed randomly around the room. Each attack targets one individual (effective score 14/7/3, damage d4s/d4+2s/d4w). Heroes diving to protect Hal inflict a +4 step penalty on attacks directed against him, but provide a -2 bonus to attacks directed against them instead.

Round Two: On the Amazing phase, Rachel's spirit forms as a barely discernible outline of her former self, crouched over Hal as he cowers behind his chair. She tries to communicate with him, but no sound can be heard. Only heroes making an Awareness-*intuition* check at a +2 step penalty are able to perceive the exchange. She seems to be asking, "Help me! Help me!" over and over again. On the Ordinary phase, Rachel loses her patience as Hal doesn't seem to see her and more objects fly around the room. This time Hal's chair and two more just like it are

Ghost of Rachel Prewitt

STR 4 INT 9
DEX 10 WIL 11 [+1]
CON 8 PER 8
Durability: 8/8/4/4



Action Check Score: 15+ /14/7/3

Move: fly 28, sprint 14, run 10, walk 4 #Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary / 2 Last Resorts: 1

Psionic energy points: 6

Attacks:

Psychokinetics 14/7/3 special LI/O

Defenses:

Intagibility: +5 resistance modifier to melee and ranged attacks (only +2 vs. silver weapons)
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills:

Acrobatics [10]-*flight* [15]; Stealth [10]-*hide* [20], *sneak* [20], *shadow* [20]; Stamina [8]-*endurance* [20], *resist pain* [20]; Awareness [11]-*perception* [14]; Creativity [11]-*journalism* [14], *photography* [12]; Investigate [11]-*research* [14], *search* [14]; Telekinesis [11]-*photokinetics* [14], *psychokinetics* [14]; Interaction [8]-*charm* [12], *intimidate* [12]; Telepathy [8]-*contact* [10].

Description:

Rachel Prewitt was once a very promising photojournalist, undertaking a number of special undercover assignments in order to blow the whistle on corporations involved in illegal activities. She made her living by scooping the competition with her disguises, charm, and wit. Her ghostly image strongly resembles her former self: thin, petite, and with soft-chiseled features. She stands only five-feet-six, but hovers nearly a foot off the ground. Her insubstantial clothing resembles the smock of a factory worker and she car-

tossed into the air, attacking anyone nearby (effective score 14/7/3, damage d4+1s/d4w/d4+1w).

Round Three: On the Good phase, Rachel begins to realize the chaos she's creating. In an effort to shield Hal from the barrage of dangerous objects, she pulls desks from every direction, placing them in a square around him. To the heroes,

it might appear as though she's trying to crush him instead. Her control over the desks is tenuous at best. Any hero moving to 'rescue' Hal is subject to more attacks from light debris (effective score 14/7/3, damage d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s). On the Ordinary phase, the storm finally blows itself out in a wave of numbing cold. Anyone within 3 meters of Hal's position must make a Resolve-physical resolve skill check. On a Critical Failure, the hapless victim suffers d8+3 points of stun damage; Failure, d6+2s; Ordinary success, d4+1s; Good success, d4-2s; and no damage on an Amazing success.

After the three rounds of dangerous and harrowing psychokinetic activity, Rachel finally calms down enough to regain control. Only heroes that successfully make an Awareness-intuition skill check can perceive her ghostly form still hovering in the air. If all of the heroes fail the check, allow the lowest roll to still spot her. Read or paraphrase the following, including only the first paragraph for those that fail the check:

Suddenly, the chaos comes to an end. The newsroom is an utter shambles. Fluorescent lights hang from their shattered casings in the ceiling, many of them broken and no longer providing illumination. Trash and broken furniture lies everywhere and Hal is very still, clearly struck unconscious by the flying debris or numbing cold.

"No...", the softly glowing vision of a woman says, hovering in the air as she looks down upon Hal. A long coat hangs from her body, softly flapping in an ethereal breeze. She also holds a camera in her small hands. It seems to float next to her as she puts her hands over her face and begins to cry. "What happened? I never meant for this...I just wanted to...oh, Hal, I'm so sorry," she says, reaching a translucent hand down to touch him, but drawing back before the coldness of her touch can do more harm, "I just wanted to talk...I need your help..."

Finally, she turns and looks directly into your eyes. "You! You can see me? Yes!" she exclaims. Somewhere in the distance a telephone rattles across the floor in response to her excitement, smashing into the door. "You must help me! Please?" She gestures toward the windows that look out upon the streets of Dallas, "Somewhere...out there...lies my body. A junk-

yard. It's where they took my life. You must retrieve the pictures! I can prove who did it. And I can prove the other things they've been doing... that they've...that..." The girl's form wavers for an instant. "Oh no," she says looking helplessly around the room, "I can't stay. I...please, before it's too late! Find the junkyard! It has an armadillo on the sign out front. Please...you're the only ones that can help." And then her ghostly image fades away.

After Rachel's Departure

With the ghost's disappearance, the heroes can take time to recover (through first aid, if necessary). Eventually, Hal awakens but provides almost no help since he never perceived the ghost, only the dangerous effects of Rachel's manifestation. If the heroes describe her appearance to him, he acknowledges that he occasionally works with an undercover journalist named Rachel Prewitt that fits the description. He shows them a picture of her for positive identification. The heroes discover that Hal's leg was broken during Rachel's psychokinetic episode and he drops in and out of consciousness as they try to stabilize him (successful Medical Science-treatment or Knowledge-first aid skill check). If they succeed, they can continue to speak with him. A successful Interaction-interview skill check will yield the following information about Rachel:

Ordinary success – She recently got involved in an undercover operation about four months ago. Something involving a computer company. Rachel was surprised by how fast they dominated a certain segment of the market and wanted to see if they were dirty somehow. She always liked revealing the dirt on big corporations.

Good success – Rachel called him once for a contact number inside the Drug Enforcement Agency, but never told him what the story was all about. He gives the heroes the same phone number, and if they contact the DEA the organization acknowledges they currently have an agent on a case in the area, but refuse to share any details about it, citing security concerns.

Amazing success – Rachel mentioned something about a strange piece of computer-tech that she discovered. She sent him a schematic once and had him forward it to an expert. The results never

came back, but he kept a copy of the diagram just in case. If the heroes examine it, they can make a *Lore-fringe science* skill check to determine that it's a computer core of alien design.

Scene Two: Junkyard Blues

Following Rachel's clues about the junkyard with an armadillo sign, the heroes can use any local phone book to locate the site. An *Investigate-search* skill check is recommended, but not entirely necessary. The Armadillo Dump is clearly advertised in the yellow pages and its address puts it on the outskirts of the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Unknown to the heroes, Rachel continues to invisibly tag along, hopeful that they will help to carry out retribution for her untimely death. Still new to the ways of the afterlife, she must rest before she can manifest again, so there's no way to contact her until she's ready to reappear.

When you're ready to continue the adventure, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The wide-open skies of Dallas continue to loom over you. Heavy thunderclouds are gathering, sharply defined by the late evening sunset. At least the rain ended some time ago, but the streets are still wet. As you turn off onto a dirt road you can hear the mud stirred up by your car. A short while later you pull up to a pair of chain-link gates held together by a padlock. A large sign above them announces your arrival to the Armadillo Dump. Peering through the gate, the junkyard itself appears deserted and you can make out huge piles of rusting debris leading off in every direction. The whole site is circled by a fence topped with razor-wire.

To enter the junkyard, the heroes are faced with the challenge of getting past the fence or gates. A successful *Manipulation-lockpick* skill check with a -1 step bonus due to the poor quality of the lock will easily open the gate. Climbing over the fence is a bit more difficult because of the barbed wire. An *Athletics-climb* skill check with a +1 step penalty will have the following results: Critical Failure, d4+1w inflicted by the razor-wire and the victim is unsuccessful in climbing over the fence; Failure, d4-1w and the climb fails; Ordinary success, d4-1s and the climb succeeds; Good success or Amazing success, no damage. If extra precautions are taken, such as throwing a

heavy blanket over the wire before attempting the climb, the +1 step penalty is negated.

The only other alternative is to crash the gate (durability 5, Ordinary toughness, and d4 light armor). This can easily be accomplished in a variety of ways, including the use of the heroes' vehicle. The rules for destroying such a barrier can be found in Chapter 3 of the *Gamemaster's*

Colombian Mercenaries (4)

Level 1 Combat Specs, Mercenaries

STR 13 [+2] INT 9

DEX 11 [+1] WIL 9

CON 10 PER 8

Durability: 10/10/5/5

Action Check Score: 14+ /13/6/3

Move: sprint 24, run 14, walk 4 #Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary / 2 Last Resorts: 0

Attacks:

Unarmed 14/7/3 Personal

d4+2s/d4+3s/d4+4s LI/O

Knife (x1) 14/7/3 Personal

d4+2w/d4+3w/d4+4w LI/O

Brass Knuckles (x1) 14/7/3 Personal

d4+2s/d4+2w/d4+3w LI/O

.45 caliber Pistol* 12/6/3 6/12/40

d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+1m HI/O

* This weapon incurs a +1 step accuracy penalty

Defenses:

+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Skills:

Athletics [13]-*climb* [14], *throw* [14]; Melee Weapons [13]-*blade* [14]; Unarmed Attack [13]-*brawl* [14]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11]-*pistol* [12]; Vehicle Operation [11]; Stamina [10]-*endurance* [11]; Knowledge [9]-*language: English* [10], *language: Spanish* [12]; Awareness [9]-*perception* [10]; Resolve [9]-*physical resolve* [10]; Interaction [8]-*intimidate* [10].

Description:

These mercenaries are little more than hired muscle by the Colombian drug lords in South America. Not especially bright, they like to resort to their fists to resolve most problems.

Guide, but the action is certain to announce their presence to the Colombian mercenaries inside, negating any opportunity for surprise.

Once inside, the heroes are free to explore the area. Eventually, they will encounter a handful of Orrin's Colombian mercenaries engaged in the interrogation of a DEA agent, the same agent Rachel contacted with her discoveries. They are in the process of interrogating him. Read or paraphrase the following text to the players when their heroes arrive on the scene. If the mercenaries are already aware that the heroes entered the junkyard, this scene is simply acted out by two mercenaries while the others ambush them from behind.

Weaving your way over and around various piles of junk, you're beginning to give up all hope of ever finding Rachel Prewitt's body. The junkyard is just too big and it could take days to sift through every mound of steel and rubble. Perhaps a search-and-rescue team with dogs might

help?

Just then, you round the corner and hear the distinctive sound of a man being struck with a hard fist! "Tell us what you know and we'll let you live!" a harsh voice speaks, somewhat broken by a Spanish accent.

The ragged response from the man on the receiving end of the blow is too muffled to understand. Quietly creeping forward you close the distance and peer past a pile of junk at the interrogation scene. A large, angry Hispanic man dressed in military pants and a t-shirt punches his prisoner again. "You can do better than that. I think you know more," he says. The beaten man looks to be nearly unconscious, but you can barely make out a patch from the Drug Enforcement Agency on the jacket used to bind his arms.

"I told you...I only know what the girl said...that Wray was dirty...smuggling cocaine across the border," the prisoner mumbles, "I just started surveillance on the company two days ago. You were the first lead I had, so I followed it."

Another man walks into view. "I believe we have enough," he says, also with a Spanish-accent, "He's acting alone. If anyone else knew about us they would have come to save him by now." He lifts a pistol, pointing it in the direction of the prisoner. "Adios, amigo. Thanks for your cooperation..."

At this point, the heroes may wish to intervene. It's clear that the mercenaries intend to murder the DEA agent. A combat scene should probably begin. However, if the heroes devise a crafty plan to talk their way into the situation, they should be allowed to try. The Colombians will view them with a large amount of skepticism, though, and combat may eventually break out anyway.

It's important to note that only two of the mercenaries are in sight. The other two are keeping watch in



a different direction than the heroes approached and won't arrive on the scene until the second round of combat. If, however, the heroes made enough noise entering the junkyard or brought attention to themselves in some other way, the two additional mercenaries will have circled around behind them. Allow the heroes an Awareness-*intuition* or Tactics-*infantry* skill check to sense the ambush, and require a separate check for each of the two men. If both go unnoticed, Rachel's ghost will briefly manifest to warn the heroes, pointing behind them. If they spot at least one of the ambushers, she won't come to their aid yet.

Once the Colombians feel they are outmatched, they will attempt to grab the prisoner and use him as a shield. They'll be more interested in escaping and making sure the heroes don't get a chance to learn anything from the DEA agent. Their van is parked on the other side of the junkyard, requiring a swift run to reach it. In addition, any hero attempting to chase the fleeing mercenaries should perform a Movement-*race* or – *trailblazing* skill check depending on whether they are trying to go around or over the piles of junk lying in the way. A Critical Failure results in d4 points of stun damage.

The van itself has standard statistics from the *Player's Handbook*. It's quite possible that a small chase scene could be inserted. The mercenaries aren't particularly good drivers, so the heroes stand a good chance of running them off the road. Rachel's ghost may also assist by frightening them into a crash.

Scene Three: Picture This...

After resolving the situation between the DEA agent and the Colombian mercenaries, the heroes greatly improve their chances of discovering Rachel's body, the storage disk from her digital camera, and evidence of drug trafficking. They also have a chance to speak with the DEA agent. His name is Devin Hembree (use the template for an Ordinary Law Enforcer from Chapter 6 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*) and he's way in over his head on this assignment. He only knows about the drug connection. Rachel never shared any information about the Goblins. Give the heroes a chance to administer first aid to Devin and then require a complex Interaction-*interview* skill

check to obtain the following information:

1 success: Devin does indeed work for the Drug Enforcement Agency. He's been on the force for less than a year now and doesn't have much experience.

2 successes: An anonymous girl contacted him about two weeks ago with accusations of drug trafficking and smuggling by Wray Information Systems. At the time, she didn't indicate the parties that were involved...just enough information to get his superiors interested in sending him down to check out the allegations. He never made contact with her, even though she had agreed to meet him at a neutral site.

3 successes: After staking out the company, Devin was able to positively identify a known Colombian drug runner apparently working there as an employee. The men that captured and interrogated him at the junkyard were also Colombians, illegally residing in the country...and actively engaging in the production and smuggling of cocaine.

4 successes: Although the Wray corporate headquarters is quite large, Devin identified a smaller building where the Colombians come and go, usually during the night shift. His next step would be to secure a search warrant and take a team of DEA agents on a raid.

Devin hasn't had a chance to contact his superiors yet and would appreciate it if the heroes would report his condition to them. It's quite apparent that he's going to need more medical attention at the hospital and the painkillers will keep him sidelined too long to follow up on the investigation. This gives the heroes a golden opportunity to investigate the matter themselves. Once they become aware of the extraterrestrial Goblin presence, this will be even more important in order to manage how much information gets into the hands of the DEA.

The rest of the scene involves a complex Investigate-*search* skill check to collect the necessary clues to figure out what's really happening and why Rachel Prewitt died. Their labors can yield the following results:

1 success: A shallow grave is discovered not too

far away from Devin's interrogation site. Beneath four feet of dirt rest the remains of Rachel's body. A successful Medical Science-*forensics* skill check would place the time of death around ten days ago. She is dressed in a lab coat bearing the Wray Information Systems logo. Attached to it is a stolen passkey card that can be used to access Orrin's secret compound beneath the corporate headquarters.

2 successes: Directly behind the site of Devin's interrogation, the heroes discover a tool shed. Hidden among several hammers, shovels, and pieces of junk is a fairly expensive digital camera. It resembles the insubstantial version held by Rachel's ghostly image. A Medical Science-*forensics* or Law-law *enforcement* skill check can identify the fingerprints on it as belonging to Rachel Prewitt, as well as another unidentified person (Orrin Wray). Its memory disk is missing, so any photographs that were taken by the device are currently unavailable.

3 successes: Inside a secret compartment in the Colombians' van lies a suitcase and a paper bag. The suitcase contains fifteen packages of pure cocaine (with a street value of \$500,000). The paper bag is full of money (\$25,000).

4 successes: Drug synthesizing equipment is found inside another shack, clearly designed for distilling cocaine into its various street forms. Two sleeping bags are also on the floor and one of them contains a strange piece of equipment inside. A successful Lore-*fringe science* skill check can determine that it's manufactured with alien technology. Another Lore-*fringe science* skill check, or a Knowledge-*deduce* skill check with a +2 step penalty, discovers that the device acts as an easily controllable heat source, providing steady, even 'cooking' of substances while injecting different kinds of chemicals (some of extraterrestrial origin). Apparently, the mercenaries have used it to experiment on crafting new forms of cocaine.

At some point during the investigation process and collection of clues, Rachel's ghost once again appears to the heroes. Read or paraphrase the following text to them:

A cool breeze begins to pick up as the sun finally disappears over the horizon. A few drops of rain begin to fall again, causing you to look up at the

sky. Somewhere in the distance you spot a plane beginning to land, its lights blinking against a background of gray.

Then a noise captures your attention. The hood of a rusty old car begins to rattle in the breeze, its headlights suddenly flaring to life. Shielding your eyes against the glare, the silhouette of Rachel Prewitt's ghost once again materializes before your eyes. "The car...the disk...the photos...the proof...it's in the car," she murmurs, "Find it. Use it. You have to know the full story and make it known to everyone. Please?"

The breeze suddenly stops. The headlights go out. And only the rumble of the plane's engines can be heard in the distance.

Searching the car, the heroes can easily discover the lost memory disk from Rachel's digital camera. She tossed it through an open window and onto the floor of the driver's side when her executioners left her alone for a few moments. A successful Awareness-*perception* skill check by any hero will find it. Getting access to the images stored inside might be more difficult, however.

If the heroes managed to locate Rachel's camera in the nearby shack, all they need to do is recharge its batteries, insert the disk and view the images on the camera's LCD display panel. Without the camera, a complex Technical Science-*juryrig* skill check (5 successes / 15 minutes between each check) is necessary to access the data and download it to another computer. Computer Science-*hardware* can be used as a supporting skill to provide a -1/-2/-3 step bonus to each subsequent roll. Optionally, the heroes could also be forced to take the disk to a local retailer of digital cameras and bargain for a new one so they can view the images.

Once they gain access to Rachel's photographs, the plot should thicken considerably. Several of the digitally rendered images contain shots of an extraterrestrial race of 3-foot tall beings. Unless the heroes are familiar with Goblins, they won't recognize them...but they're clearly different than Greys or any other extraterrestrial currently on file. The pictures also portray Orrin Wray in a number of meetings with the aliens on company grounds. Beside him are the same Colombian mercenaries.

Scene Four: Hostile Takeover

Acting upon the information provided by Devin Hembree and/or the clues from the site of Rachel's death, the heroes should set about the task of infiltrating Wray Information Systems. With the sun going down, they already have the cover of darkness on their side. The above ground map also might prove useful in orienting the players, and Devin would have provided at least a description of the corporate compound to the heroes. Once they arrive, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The approach to Wray Information Systems proceeds without a hitch. The cloudy skies serve to block out the moon and only a few stars shine through occasionally. A fine mist of rain also continues to fall around you, muffling your movements and hopefully making any security guards reluctant to venture outside.

The heroes have a number of options available to them for getting inside the Wray compound's perimeter. Use of the *Security-protection protocols* skill should provide a -1/-2/-3 step bonus on any additional actions to enter unnoticed. Heroes can attempt to do so with a *Stealth-sneak* check opposed by the security guards' *Awareness-perception* (scores of 12/6/3), or an *Entertainment-act* skill check in combination with a reliable and mundane disguise (such as a Wray employee). They can also choose a more direct method, opting for *Interaction-charm*, *Deception-bluff* and *-bribe*, or even *Entertainment-act* in order to pass themselves off as the Colombian mercenaries from the junkyard, legitimate law enforcers (such as the DEA), or just visiting businessmen. The Gamemaster is encouraged to assign a penalty or bonus to the overall skill check based upon how well the players roleplay the situation and any useful props they might employ (such as the Colombians' van).

At some point, it is assumed the heroes enter the building and want to locate the most secure sec-

tions because they'll hold the greatest secrets. Orrin likes to keep the Colombians totally dependent on him for access to the complex, so none of them hold a passkey. In addition, although he provides security passes to his guards, he hasn't trusted any of them with the goings-on down below in the secret compound. The heroes will simply have to use all of their skills and wits to get inside.

By accessing any of the security workstations via *Computer Science-hacking* (or a *Knowledge-*

computer operation check at a +1 step penalty), they can learn that the basement is off-limits to anyone not bearing the proper passkey. Only the security guards have them, so eventually the heroes must try to ob-

tain a passkey from one of them, or simply make use of Rachel's stolen passkey if they obtained it from her remains at the junkyard. If they have to take on the guards, this could involve combat, *Manipulation-pickpocket*, *Interaction-seduce*, or any number of other skills. Again, the Gamemaster is encouraged to play out the scenario according to the ideas generated by his players.

If the heroes decide to attempt a break-in without a passkey, they will have to perform a complex skill check involving *Security-security devices*



Security Break-In Results Ladder:

Successes	Result
1	Successful removal of the security keypad's faceplate; access gained to internal wiring.
2	Proper wires and internal components for authentication routine identified.
3	Wiring and components disabled without alerting system of break-in attempt.
4	Mechanical locks rewired to accept a new passcode provided locally.
5	Success!

with a +3 step penalty (5 successes / 5 minutes between each check). Supporting skills are Technical Science-*juryrig*, Computer Science-*hardware*, and Manipulation-*lockpick*, with each providing a cumulative -1/-2/-3 step bonus on any single Security roll. A Critical Failure or three total Failure results during the Security check, before achieving 5 successes, will alert the guards.

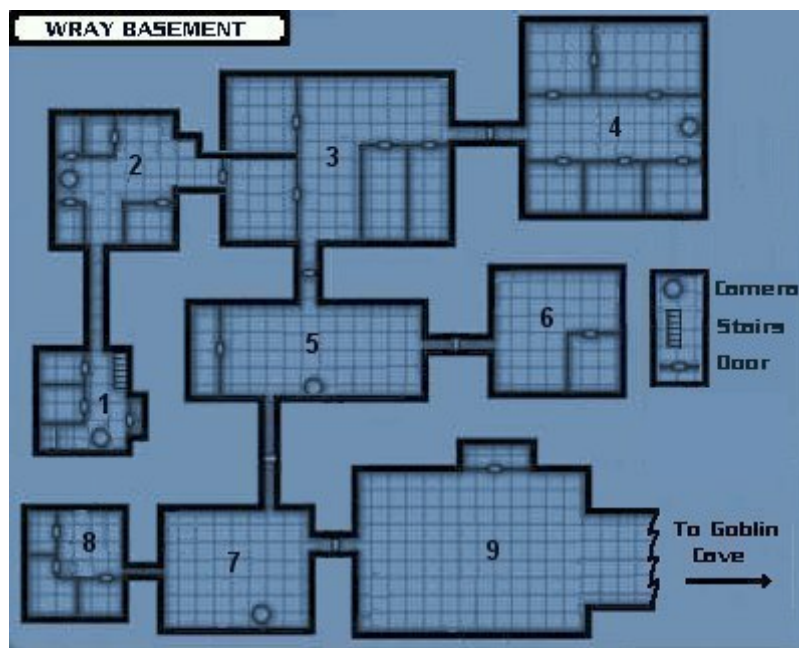
If at anytime the heroes call attention to themselves, four security guards will converge on their location. Additional guards monitor their movements via cameras mounted at various points throughout the building. The Gamemaster should feel free to send more or less guards after the heroes, depending upon how easily they handle being pursued. No more than fifteen total guards should be available, however, and they are reluctant to summon outside law enforcers without Orrin Wray's permission.

Wray Basement

Once the heroes gain access to the secure section of the corporate compound, they can take the stairs or the elevators down to the basement. Several important encounters and discoveries await them below:

1. Secured Elevators – This is the entry point to the secret subterranean complex beneath Wray Information Systems. A security camera monitored from room #2, keeps watch over the corridor. A successful Stealth-*sneak* check against the guards' Awareness-*perception* (score of 12/6/3) is necessary to leave this area without being observed. If the complex is already alerted to the heroes' presence, two guards from room #2 will be covering the area from the north, making use of the walls at the end of the hall to provide partial cover. Their attack could come as a surprise unless the heroes succeed at an Awareness-*intuition* skill check.
2. Security Station – Four security guards work here. One of them is always patrolling the deeper sections of the base, while the other three stay behind. Of the remaining men, one is always monitoring the communications and security systems to stay in touch with the other guards and what's happening elsewhere in the building.
3. Research & Development Laboratories – Wray Information Systems has a number of R&D labs in the upper levels, but this

one is special. This is where Orrin has his best scientists working around the clock to reverse-engineer the computer technology he acquires from the Goblins. The two chambers to the southeast are made from bulletproof glass and three scientists are at work here at all times (use the template for Ordinary Scientists from Chapter 6 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). These people are non-combatants and can be easily interrogated or intimidated into providing additional information about the facility. The results of any relevant skill check are as follows: Critical Failure, the individual refuses to give any information and silently triggers an alarm to summon additional security; Failure, the individual either refuses to give any information or truly knows nothing useful (a new employee, for instance); Ordinary success, the scientist explains that



- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 - Secure Elevator Entry Point | 6 - Off-System Data Cores |
| 2 - Security Station | 7 - Trophy Room |
| 3 - R&D Labs | 8 - Meeting Rooms |
| 4 - Technology Vault | 9 - Access to Underground Tunnels |
| 5 - Mainframe Systems | * - One Square Equals One Meter |

Wray Security Guards (8)

Level 1 Combat Specs, Corporate Security Specialists

STR 11 [+1] INT 9

DEX 11 [+1] WIL 10

CON 11 PER 8

Durability: 11/11/6/6 **Action**

Check Score: 14+ /13/6/3

Move: sprint 22, run 14, walk 4 **#Actions:**
2

Reaction Score: Ordinary / 2 **Last Re-**
sorts: 0

Attacks:

Unarmed 12/6/3 Personal

d4+ 1s/d4+ 2s/d4+ 3s LI/O

Night Stick 12/6/3 Personal

d4+ 2s/d4+ 1w/d4+ 2w LI/O

9mm Pistol 12/6/3 6/12/50

d4+ 1w/d4+ 2w/d4m HI/O

Defenses:

+ 1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+ 1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Skills:

Athletics [11]-*climb* [12], *throw* [12]; Melee Weapons [11]-*bludgeon* [12]; Unarmed Attack [11]-*brawl* [12]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11]-*pistol* [12]; Vehicle Operation [11]-*land* [12]; Stamina [11]-*endurance* [12]; Knowledge [9]; Security [9]-*protection protocols* [10], *security devices* [10]; Awareness [10]-*perception* [12]; Investigate [10]; Resolve [10]-*physical resolve* [11]; Interaction [8].

Description:

These security guards know nothing of Orrin's secret arrangements with the Goblins. They are aware that he often receives foreign visitors from "down South" in one of the Spanish-speaking countries, and are under orders to keep anyone from accessing the lower levels of the corporate headquarters. When the Goblins come to visit, he makes sure the Colombians keep guard instead.

Goblin Technology:

Much of what the Goblins have brought to trade with humanity is actually the cast-off equipment of more advanced races. One man's junk is another man's treasure, and the Goblins make a living off such a premise. The items Orrin Wray has bartered for consist of the following examples:

Gnoshian Emitters – These oddly inverted wrist-watches are actually portable holographic projection units. Gnoshian children often use them to play games, but they also support other computer applications. A flat round surface resting just above the palm projects a three-dimensional display when the wearer concentrates upon the program he or she wants to run and manipulate. Orrin's vault contains two of these devices and five energy packs or 'batteries' to run them. A typical energy pack lasts for 24 hours of continuous use by tapping part of the wearer's bioelectric field. One fatigue point of damage is inflicted upon the human physiology every hour unless a Stamina-*endurance* skill check succeeds with a – 1 step bonus.

Goblin Grav-Strips – These slightly luminous 'day-glow' stickers function as weight neutralizers, effectively working to counter gravity so that heavy objects can be lifted more easily. They take some getting used to, but when applied correctly can provide a –1 step bonus to Athletics and Acrobatics skill checks. The Goblins have traded slightly less useful versions than those they employ today. Orrin's vault holds five of them, but they cease operating five minutes after lifting something over 200 kilograms.

Grey Nerve Pistol – This non-lethal pistol is a PL6 design largely abandoned by the Greys after developing energy weapons. Functioning with similar principles, the nerve pistol radiates a subsonic vibration that causes pain in the central nervous system of a target:

Skill	Acc	Md	Range	Type	Damage	Actions
Mod-pistol	0	F	4/8/16	En/O	d4+ 1s/d4+ 1w/d6+ 1w	2

Ss'eran Processors – These devices work just like any other central processing unit inside a computer, but they allow machines to operate at a quantum level. When joined together they are capable of supporting a PL6 Grid or virtual reality. Orrin has only one of these precious machines and he's desperately trying to reverse-engineer it so he can establish the first Gridscape for commercial use.

they are working with foreign technology designed to enhance the processing speed and power of modern-day computers; Good success, the technology comes from an extraterrestrial source, though they are unaware of which group of aliens; Amazing success, the aliens providing the technology aren't very tall and wear silver spacesuits.

4. Technology Vault – This chamber is locked by an incredibly complex security system, with equal parts of computerized and mechanical components. A complex *Security-security devices* skill check (5 successes / 10 minutes between each check) is necessary to open it. Orrin Wray has the only key. Not even Rachel's stolen security pass will get the heroes in here. The vault contains all of the original Goblin devices and schematics that Orrin has collected over the past two or three years. The Gamemaster is free to invent strange alien artifacts and knick-knacks, some useful, some entertaining, and only a few of the deadly variety.
5. Mainframe Systems – This is the processing center for all of the computer terminals located in the upper levels of the Wray corporate headquarters. Nothing valuable can be found here in terms of information about the Goblins or drug-trade.
6. Off-System Data Cores – This chamber holds the Wray databases that are not accessible by any means other than a local interface. Even then, access is limited to those with a proper password. A successful Computer Science-*hacking* skill check yields the following results: Critical Failure, access denied, security is immediately summoned; Failure, the system cannot be accessed, but no alarms are triggered; Ordinary success, access is granted, but the only useful information that can be obtained are some financial records that indicate Wray Information Systems has misreported its income for the past three years; Good success, additional information obtained regarding a partnership with Colombian investors, including a well-known drug lord; Amaz-

ing success, additional information includes the schematics for a prototype Wray computer network that builds upon Goblin technology using Ss'eran processors to create a PL6 Grid...Orrin's company hasn't tested the configuration yet, however.

7. Trophy Room – This chamber contains a number of trophies that Orrin keeps from his mercenary days, serving in Latin and South America. He put them here to help impress his Goblin guests when they come to trade. A single security guard is located here, walking his rounds before reporting back to room #2, above.
8. Meeting Rooms – This is where Orrin brings his Goblin guests to bargain with them. One of the rooms is currently overflowing with heavy crates of various metals and ores. The Goblins have continually expressed an interest in acquiring such things instead of the cocaine shipments. For them, the drugs are a novelty item that appeals to only a select segment of their interstellar clientele. Natural resources such as metals, ores, and other compounds command a wider market.
9. Tunnel Access – Access to this chamber is guarded by another security checkpoint. The device can be overridden with a complex *Security-security devices* skill check (5 successes / 5 minutes between each attempt). Rachel's stolen passkey provides immediate entry. Inside, this large chamber was once a storage facility for Wray computer systems. Instead of storing his latest models here, Orrin has converted it into a staging area for shipping drugs to the Goblin starship. A wide tunnel opens in the western wall, unnaturally shaped by Goblin fusion drills. There is currently one Goblin technician working in the room, examining the tunnel for stability. He and his comrades intend to launch soon and don't want their ship's engines to cause any structural damage on the way out of the nearby cavern. As soon as he becomes aware of the heroes presence, he turns and sprints down the tunnel.

Goblin Technician

STR 7 INT 11
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 11 [+1]
CON 6 PER 8
Durability: 6/6/3/3



Action Check Score: 13+ /12/6/3

Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4

#Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary / 2

Last Resorts: 1

Attacks:

Unarmed* 3/1/0 d4s/d4+ 1s/d4w LI/O

* + d4 base situation die

Defenses:

+ 2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

+ 1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Armor (Good): d6 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d4+1 (En)*

* Weight neutralizing gravity strips provide a -1 step bonus to Athletics and Acrobatics skill checks

Skills:

Armor Operation [7]; Athletics [7]; Acrobatics [11]-*dodge* [18], *zero-g* [12]; Stealth [11]; Vehicle Operation [11]-*space* [14]; Movement [6]-*race* [7]; Stamina [6]-*endurance* [8]; Knowledge [11]-*computer* [12]; System Operation [11]; Technical Science [11]-*juryrig* [12]; Awareness [11]-*perception* [12]; Investigate [11]; Lore [11]-*UFO* [14], fringe science [14]; Resolve [11]; Culture [8].

Description:

This unfortunate Goblin was sent to check on the stability of the cavern system. He donned his body-fitting, silvery utility suit before leaving the ship and it gives him an otherworldly appearance in the dim lighting of the caves. He stands just a little over three feet tall with short stubby legs, tending to lean forward upon his hands while shuffling around in a monkey-like fashion.

Scene Five: Illegal Aliens

Following the unnatural tunnels beneath Wray headquarters, the heroes finally encounter the Goblin starship. Orrin and his Colombian mercenaries have just been invited to visit the Goblin merchants on board. They are eager to complete their business before the ship lifts off to visit another market.

Read or paraphrase the following text when you're ready to run this scene:

The tunnel stretches for nearly a mile before it finally opens up into a cave. Vaguely, you're aware that the rock formations inside were naturally formed rather than smoothly shaped like the walls of the tunnel behind you. But something else draws your immediate attention. Resting in the center of the cavern is what can only be described as a forty-meter spaceship. Floodlights ring the vessel, illuminating the ship and most of the cavern floor, but leaving the rest covered by deep shadows. Several crates also sit on a loading platform next to a ramp leading into the belly of the ship. Three guards, all mercenaries like the ones from the junkyard, stand just outside. What do you do?

If the Goblin technician from Scene Four managed to escape and reach the ship ahead of the heroes, the mercenaries on guard duty will have taken up positions behind the crates. The heroes will have to fight their way through them in order to board the Goblin ship and eventually confront Orrin Wray. If they manage to arrive at the cave unannounced, an opposed Stealth-*sneak* check (vs. the guards' Awareness-perception of 12/6/3) is necessary to silently move around. As long as the heroes stick to the shadows at the edge of the circle of light, these checks gain a -2 step bonus.

Goblin Cave:

The Goblin-made tunnels leading from Orrin's secret compound open up into a cavern that's actually just a giant hole in the ground. The ascent leads to the top of a rugged hillside tucked between the outermost buildings of Wray's corporate headquarters and a private golf course. Until the Goblins began using it to hide their ship, only a colony of bats made the cave their home. The Goblins have set up a large holographic projector to cover the opening above their ship in order to keep people away from the site. From the top, the hill looks perfectly normal, with an unbroken stretch of grass covering the entrance. From below, a 'natural' ceiling conceals the sky. The hidden shaft leads upward for seventy meters before emerging outside through a similar-sized opening.

A. Cave Entrance – This is where the heroes

first emerge from the tunnels into the cavern.

- B. Cargo Loading Platform – This area is used for loading and off-loading cargo on the Goblin ship. Currently, several wooden crates are stacked nearly four-feet high on the platform, with each of them containing cocaine. Three Colombian mercenaries stand guard over the product while Orrin tours the Goblin ship and makes arrangements for another deal. One of the men carries an SMG.
- C. Storage – Tucked in the shadows, this area holds all of the additional trade-goods Orrin intends to offer to the Goblins. Realizing their interest in raw resources, he has collected crates of unprocessed ores containing iron, nickel, and copper. Above these crates, a colony of bats have taken roost, hanging from a lower area of the ceiling only fifteen meters above the ground. Anyone

moving through this area is likely to disturb them. A Stealth-*sneak* check at a +1 step penalty is necessary to slip by unnoticed. Otherwise, the bats take flight causing quite a commotion before escaping through the shaft above the Goblin ship. This should give the heroes their first indication that the ceiling above is just a holographic image.

- D. Holographic Projector – These bulky emitters are far too large to move with anything less than a crane or heavy forklift. The Goblins placed them here using their grav-strips and then removed the weight nullifying devices so the projectors could be anchored to the cavern floor. It takes three of the emitters working together to achieve a realistic hologram. At the moment they are projecting a natural ceiling above the Goblin starship. Any hero attempting to interact with these devices will have to spend several minutes in a

complex Knowledge-*deduce* skill check (5 successes / 1 minute between each check) or a simple Technical Science-*xenoengineering* skill check. If successful, then a System Operation-*communications* or -*sensors* check can be made at a +1 step penalty to either change the projected image or shut down the machine.

Goblin Ship:

The Goblin ship rests in the middle of the cavern, directly below the seventy-meter shaft leading out. It's an ugly looking vessel, sharing none of the smooth lines and rounded



Colombian Mercenaries (5)

Level 2 Combat Specs, Mercenaries

STR 11 [+ 1] INT 9

DEX 11 [+ 1] WIL 10

CON 11 PER 8

Durability: 11/11/6/6

Action

Check Score: 14+ /13/6/3

Move: sprint 22, run 14, walk 4

#Actions:

2

Reaction Score: Ordinary / 2

Last Re-

sorts: 0

Attacks:

Unarmed 12/6/3 Personal

d4+ 1s/d4+ 2s/d4+ 3s LI/O

Hunting Knife 12/6/3 Personal

d4+ 2w/d4+ 3w/d4+ 4w LI/O

.45 caliber Pistol* (x3) 13/6/3 6/12/40

d4+ 1w/d4+ 2w/d4+ 1m HI/O

.45 ACP SMG* (x2) 12/6/3 8/16/50

d4+ 1w/d4+ 2w/d4+ 1m HI/O

* This weapon incurs a + 1 step accuracy penalty

Defenses:

+ 1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+ 1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Battle Vest: d6-3 (LI), d6-2 (HI), d4-2 (En)

Skills:

Armor Operation [11]; Athletics [11]-*climb* [12], *throw* [12]; Melee Weapons [11]-*blade* [12]; Unarmed Attack [11]-*brawl* [12]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11]-*pistol* [13], *SMG* [12]; Vehicle Operation [11]-*land* [12]; Stamina [11]-*endurance* [12]; Knowledge [9]; Awareness [10]-*perception* [12]; Investigate [10]; Resolve [10]-*physical resolve* [11]; Interaction [8].

Description:

These mercenaries are on loan to Orrin Wray from the Colombian drug lords in South America. None of them speak particularly good English, but they know how to fight fairly well. Three of them are armed with .45 caliber pistols while the other two carry submachineguns.

surfaces of Grey flying saucers. The Goblins refer to it as a *Gremlin*-class scout, especially designed for evasion and small cargo hauling. So far, they've taken very careful steps to keep it hidden from prying eyes. Goblin attempts to barter with humans have often met with violence and

fear, so they only trust Orrin and his cocaine-providing mercenaries to actually walk on board. Even then, this is the first time they've allowed anyone to visit them on the ship.

1. Cargo Hold – The cargo hold is currently empty. The Goblins have already off-loaded the goods Orrin bought, and the cocaine shipment is still waiting outside on the loading platform.
2. Storage Room – This room holds various supplies for keeping the Goblin ship in operation. Nothing incredibly useful will be found here, unless the heroes are interested in Goblin versions of food, drink, toiletries, and cleaning supplies.
3. Engine Room – This chamber contains the fusion reactor that powers the ship and the machinery necessary to operate the engines. A single Goblin technician is stationed here at all times. He's currently busy monitoring the equipment for the impending lift-off, so the heroes could slip through unnoticed with a successful *Stealth-sneak* check. Otherwise the technician will call attention to them by hitting the intruder alert. He will also defend himself if necessary, resorting to the Grey nerve pistol on his utility belt.
4. Auxiliary Power – This room provides backup power generators. It is currently empty.
5. Shower
6. Crew Quarters – Six bunks fill this room. No one is currently here.
7. Galley – A small kitchen and refrigeration unit take up space in this room.
8. Weapons Station – The stations in this room control the single energy weapon mounted on the Goblin ship. The Weapons officer is currently absent as he meets with his fellow Goblins and Orrin Wray.
9. Sensors Station – The stations in this room are also unmanned while the meeting is in progress with Orrin Wray.
10. Escape Pod – This chamber is actually a breakaway escape pod that can be separately piloted or used as an additional airlock to exit the ship. The hatch in the floor can only be opened from inside the pod. Also, the door from room 10 cannot be opened from here, since it serves as

Orrin Wray

Level 4 Combat Spec, Former Mercenary/Corporate Executive

STR 11 [+1] INT 9
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 10 [+1]
CON 10 PER 9

Durability: 10/10/5/5

Action Check Score: 14+ /13/6/3

Move: sprint 22, run 14, walk 4 #Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary / 2 Last Resorts: 1



Attacks:

Unarmed 14/7/3 Personal d4s+1/d4+2s/d4+3s LI/O
9mm Pistol 14/7/3 6/12/50 d4+1w/d4+2w/d4m HI/O
Shotgun 13/6/3 6/12/30 d4w/d6w/d4m HI/O
Frag. Grenade*

12/6/3 11/22/44 d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w HI/G

* This weapon incurs a +1 step accuracy penalty

Defenses:

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Bulletproof Vest: d6-3 (LI), d6-2 (HI), d4-2 (En)

Skills:

Athletics [11]-throw [12]; Unarmed Attack [11]-brawl [14]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11]-pistol [14], rifle [13]; Vehicle Operation [11]-land [12]; Stamina [10]-endurance [12]; Knowledge [9]-computer operation [11], language: English [12], language: Spanish [12]; Tactics [9]; Awareness [10]-perception [12]; Lore [10]-UFO [11], fringe science [12]; Resolve [10]-physical resolve [12]; Street Smart [10]-net savvy [11]; Deception [9]-bluff [10], bribe [10]; Interaction [9]-intimidate [12], taunt [10].

Perks: Fortitude, Willpower

Description:

Orrin Wray is a large burly man, only somewhat out-of-shape compared to his days as a mercenary. He trained and fought in the jungles of Latin America for ten years after mustering out of the United States army. He has a deep love for strategic combat, something that has translated well to his ruthlessness in corporate life. Physically, he stands just over six-feet-two and weighs nearly 200 pounds. His balding head is covered by a Texas cowboy hat and he handles his weapons like a trained professional.

an emergency exit from the Command Deck only. The hallway door is accessible from either side., however. The pod itself is incapable of interplanetary flight, but it can be guided down into any planet's atmosphere once launched, and then operated as a somewhat unwieldy jet aircraft.

11. Command Deck – The only entrances to this room are from the hallway or room 9. The door to room 10, the Escape Pod, is a one-way access initiated from inside the Command Deck during emergency escapes. The meeting between Orrin Wray and the Goblins takes place here. Orrin has two Colombian mercenaries with him and three Goblins are also present. If they already became aware of the heroes' presence aboard the ship, the meeting will have come to an abrupt end and everyone is prepared for their arrival. Otherwise, the meeting is just winding down and Orrin is on his way out after concluding a new deal. Either way, the Goblins are in the process of initiating the launch sequence for the ship. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As you reach for the door, it suddenly opens and you come face-to-face with three men. Two of them look just like the mercenaries you've been fighting with for so long. The other is a large man slipping a pocket computer into his jacket. Behind him are three aliens just starting to reach for the ship's piloting and control systems.

The man wearing the suit lifts a shotgun in his other hand. "Get'em boys!" he says, "Nobody's gonna mess with this deal..." What do you do?

As the heroes encounter Orrin and his men on their way out the door, he directs the mercenaries to open fire. This should begin the first round of combat. One of the mercenaries carries a submachinegun and Orrin has both a shotgun and fragmentation grenade obviously capable of clearing a path to the exit. Before Orrin decides to use the grenade to good effect however, Rachel's ghost bursts

onto the scene as well. Play out the first round of combat with shots being exchanged. Then, read or paraphrase the following to introduce Rachel's reappearance in the Amazing phase of the second round:

Suddenly, in the heat of battle, a numbing coldness creeps into the room. Even your opponents recognize that something unusual is starting to happen around them. The aliens seem concerned as well, fidgeting with their controls to determine if there's a problem with the ship.

But you're somewhat better prepared. You've experienced this feeling before. It always comes when Rachel's ghost appears. And true to form, her image materializes from the hull of the ship, blazing into the melee in a fury of ethereal wind and light.

"Yooooouuuuu!" her disembodied voice cries out, "I told you I'd have my revenge! Not even the cold shallow grave your men dug for me could hold me down. Even in death, you won't escape me, Orrin Wray!"

As Rachel appears, this should begin the second round of combat. She tries to invoke her psychokinetic powers to aid the heroes, but actually stirs up even more trouble. In the Good phase of Round Two, another vortex of wind erupts across the command deck of the Goblin ship, lifting a number of small objects and tools and flinging them around the room. Treat this as an area attack (score of 14/7/3, d4s/d4+1s/d4w, LI/O) against everyone on the bridge.

Frightened by Rachel's disruptive psychokinetic powers, the Goblins take steps to neutralize her before she can do any further damage. In the Marginal phase of Round Two, one of the tiny aliens produces a strange mechanical box and unleashes its effects on her spirit. This essentially imprisons Rachel inside the alien artifact and the rest of the combat is up to the heroes. Read or paraphrase

the following to describe the scene.

Orrin's face has visibly paled at the sight of Rachel Prewitt's ghost. He scrambles behind one of the aliens shouting for them to do something. A cold wind whips around the room forming a vortex similar to the one Rachel summoned at Hal's office when you first met. Tiny tools and small pieces of equipment are pulled into the air and hurled violently outward. Many of them also sail in your direction!

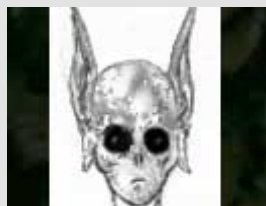
After the initial barrage of objects ends, one of the aliens finally steps forward. Clutched within its hand is a small rectangular box with luminous signal lights blinking all along the outer edges. He presses a button and an orange light starts to glow from inside. He then rolls it under Rachel's hovering spirit and a cone of light erupts from the box as two small panels slide open. The energy engulfs Rachel's form and pulls her down into the inner depths of the box. Her whirlwind of force abruptly ends and the shooting begins again.

At this point, Orrin and any of his remaining mercenaries open fire again. The Goblins return to preparing the ship for takeoff, take cover behind their stations, and leave the mechanical box lying on the floor. If the battle starts to turn against Orrin (e.g., once he gets down to half his wound points), he throws his grenade and rushes for the escape hatch leading to the escape pod (room 10). The Goblins showed him how the hatches work when they gave him a tour of the ship, so he's aware that it offers a way outside.

Any heroes chasing Orrin will have to contend with the grenade, which causes irreparable damage to the Goblin command deck, but not enough to prevent them from flying the ship. In addition, Orrin locks the hatch behind him and the heroes must succeed at a Manipulation-*lockpick*, Security-*security devices*, or Technical Science-*juryrig* skill check at a +2 step penalty to follow. Once outside,

Goblins (4)

STR 7 INT 10
DEX 11 [+1] WIL 11 [+1]
CON 6 PER 8
Durability: 6/6/3/3



Action Check Score: 13+/12/6/3

Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4

#Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary / 2

Last Resorts: 1

Attacks:

Unarmed* 3/1/0 d4s/d4+ 1s/d4w LI/O

Grey Nerve Pistol* 11/5/2 d4+ 1s/d4+ 1w/d6+ 1w En/O

* + d4 base situation die

Defenses:

+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Armor (Good): d6 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d4+1 (En)*

* Weight neutralizing gravity strips provide a -1 step bonus to Athletics and Acrobatics skill checks

Skills:

Armor Operation [7]; Athletics [7]; Acrobatics [11]-*dodge* [18], *zero-g* [12]; Modern Ranged Weapons [11]; Stealth [11]; Vehicle Operation [11]-*space* [14]; Movement [6]-*race* [7]; Stamina [6]-*endurance* [8]; Knowledge [10]-*computer* [12]; System Operation [10]; Awareness [11]-*perception* [12]; Investigate [11]; Lore [11]-*UFO* [14], *fringe science* [14]; Resolve [11]; Culture [8].

Description:

These goblins have little fight in them. Seeing themselves more as traders than warriors, they are more than happy to allow others to do their fighting, including Orrin and his men. But, if hard pressed, they will defend themselves with weapons they 'liberated' from a Grey outpost. While near the relative safety of their starship, the Goblins have removed their helmets, but still wear protective utility suits. This allows some of their physical characteristics to be more easily discerned. Barely over three feet tall, they hunch over on their hands much like a monkey, using them to walk more often than their short stubby legs. Two large pointy ears protrude from their heads and their eyes are perfectly circular with an unnatural luminosity even in total darkness.

Orrin runs for cover behind the crates at location C (and stirring up the bats if they're still around). He makes his last stand there as the Goblins attempt to pilot the ship out of the cavern.

Give the heroes at least a couple of rounds to exit the ship, regardless of whether they chase Orrin or leave through the cargo hold area. They can also pick up the ghost-trap used to imprison Rachel, if they think to do so. If instead, the heroes try to prevent the Goblins from leaving (at gunpoint or similar means), the aliens simply shrug and point at the terminals as if to say the system is on autopilot and can't be overridden. Indeed, it is on autopilot now and being controlled remotely by a larger Goblin cruiser passing through the system. If any heroes refuse to exit the ship, they could find their way into the stars, effectively cutting short this adventure and beginning an entirely new one. Or, at the Gamemaster's option, a Grey vessel could intercept the Goblin ship and return the heroes to Earth. This option presents a number of nasty opportunities for the Gamemaster to install Grey implants into the heroes or wipe their memories of the entire episode.

Ghost Trap:

This alien artifact usually appears in the form of a small rectangular box with mechanical components designed to harness the energies of otherworldly beings and draw them inward. It forces the target to make a Resolve-*mental resolve* skill check or become imprisoned inside the trap. It can only do this to one creature, lacking the storage capacity to accommodate more than one being at a time. Effectively, the device serves as a trap for ghosts, spirits, and other creatures of non-corporeal nature. Once inside, the prisoner is subjected to the slow torture of the artifact drawing away its life source...it uses this to power the dampening fields used to contain the spirit. It's quite an unpleasant experience and can drive most ghosts mad with the pain after prolonged exposure. The prisoner can attempt to break free of the box once a month through another Resolve-*mental resolve* skill check, but only an Amazing success will do so.

Anyone manipulating the device while a spirit is trapped inside can attempt to communicate with it. A mindwalker with *Telepathy-contact* will find this easier than a non-mindwalker, giving them an intuitive -2 step bonus to the attempt. Still, anyone can try to use the built-in mechanical components of the box with a System Operation-*communications* feat check. The results of either check will yield the following possibilities:

Critical Failure – The spirit contained within the artifact is unleashed in a painful psychic explosion, both to it and the holder of the device. Each must immediately undergo a Resolve-*mental resolve* skill check and the wielder suffers one fatigue point of damage. A Critical Failure on the Resolve check knocks the victim unconscious (or dissipates the spirit, forcing it to spend a last resort point to reform itself weeks later). A Failure result inflicts d8+4s; Ordinary success, d6+2s; Good success, d4+1s; and an Amazing success inflicts only d4-1s.

Failure – No contact can be made with the imprisoned spirit, and the wielder loses one fatigue point.

Ordinary – The wielder of the artifact can establish three rounds of conversation with the imprisoned spirit, but it is not obligated to respond. Interaction skill checks are necessary to otherwise keep it interested in the conversation.

Good – The wielder can speak with the spirit for up to ten minutes, and it is somewhat more inclined to respond. Treat the contact as Friendly, rather than Neutral. In addition, the wielder can offer the imprisoned spirit another opportunity to escape in the form of a cooperative Resolve-*mental resolve* and Technical Science-*xenoengineering* skill check. The success of the wielder's *xenoengineering* check can provide a -1/-2/-3 step bonus to the spirit's attempt to break free. An Amazing success on the Resolve-*mental resolve* check is still necessary to do so.

Amazing – The wielder gains complete access to the spirit and may speak with it for up to an hour. Treat the spirit as Friendly, rather than Neutral during the encounter. He or she can also willingly release the spirit from the prison at any time during their conversation by simply succeeding at a

new Technical Science-*xenoengineering* AND System Operation-*defenses* or Security-*security devices* skill check.

Scene Six: Death Becomes Her

Eventually the heroes free themselves from the Goblin ship and bring closure to the adventure. If they grabbed the alien artifact used by the Goblins to imprison Rachel, they can experiment with it to release her. Doing so requires a complex Technical Science-*xenoengineering* skill check (5 successes / 3 days between each check) to research the item and the necessary features to operate it. After that, the heroes can attempt to release Rachel's spirit by involving a mindwalker or making the attempt on their own. See the Ghost Trap sidebar for more information.

If the heroes do successfully release Rachel from the artifact, read or paraphrase the following scene to the players:

The panels on the tiny box slide open once again and you shield your eyes against the glaring light inside. "Freeeeee..." Rachel's voice reaches your ears and then she reappears before you, hovering in the air as the box snaps shut.

"Thank you so much," she says, "It was...painful in there. And thank you for everything else, too. I don't know what to make of being a ghost now, but I've learned a lot in the past several hours. I certainly never thought I'd get the opportunity to repay Orrin and his men. I never could have rested until someone exposed his operation here."

She looks off into the distance, as if seeing something beyond your own ability to perceive. "I don't know if I'll be able to come back again. But if I do, I won't forget you." She starts to float away toward the sky. "I have to go. Tell Hal I said goodbye."

In the meantime, the heroes have a lot of loose ends to wrap up. The Hoffmann Institute is going to want to know what happened. If the Goblin ship successfully launched from the cave, the Dallas area experiences a number of UFO sightings called into local news stations. The MIBs show up to downplay the situation, offering a host

of more plausible explanations (freak thunderstorms, low flying planes trying to avoid the clouds, etc.). In addition, Orrin Wray comes under DEA investigation and if the heroes captured him, he's placed on trial and sentenced to thirty-five years in prison on multiple counts of drug trafficking. A small obituary appears in the newspaper for Rachel Prewitt and the discovery of her remains at the junkyard stirs up controversy on the local news broadcasts.

Achievements

- 2 achievement points for giving Rachels' spirit a sense of closure and the ability to finally rest in peace. Recovering her body and the photos, and then putting them into the hands of the proper authorities can accomplish this. It also implies seeking justice against Orrin Wray and the Colombians as well as freeing her from imprisonment inside the Goblin ghost-trap in the final scene. A single achievement point might be awarded for partially completing the goal.
- 2 achievement points for rescuing Devin Hembree the DEA agent, while eliminating the Colombian mercenaries and their drug operation. This can be accomplished by taking custody of the illegal drugs and cash, freeing Devin from their clutches, and defeating all of the Colombians throughout the entire adventure. A single achievement point might be awarded for partially completing these tasks.
- 1 achievement point for recovering all of the Goblin technology from the junkyard and Wray headquarters, thereby keeping it out of the hands of dangerous people.
- 1 achievement point for outsmarting Orrin Wray (either through direct combat, interac-

tion, or by capturing him to be turned over to the authorities).

- 1 bonus achievement point for successfully dealing with the Goblins (either through combat, the establishment of friendly relations, or alerting the Greys and other rival Illuminati groups to their presence).
- Powerful Ally/New Contacts: especially resourceful heroes might be rewarded with a continuing contact in the DEA, among the Goblins, or Rachel herself as she returns every now and then with new information.

Future Adventure Hooks

- The Goblins could go on to develop another relationship with the Qualitech Corporation and Gamemasters can kickoff the adventure hook under the East Coast Boys in Chapter 6 of the *Dark*Matter Campaign Setting* sourcebook.
- The heroes could move on to Houston, Texas and become involved in the Sandman operations there as another breakout of the Houston 'virus' occurs.
- A relationship with Devin Hembree in the DEA could develop, thereby pulling the heroes into another adventure involving that organization and the Colombian drug lords seeking revenge. Perhaps the Goblin 'cooking' device from the junkyard was already used to create a dangerous new drug finding its way onto the streets?
- Hal Robinson could maintain contact with the heroes, soliciting them for assistance in a new plot.
- Rachel's ghost could return and kick off a whole new investigation of yet another shady enterprise.

